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ABSTRACT

In this limited study, two areas were of primary concern: the media coordinator's responsibilities and the media coordinator's personality traits. School superintendents and media coordinators were asked to rank the importance of eleven media responsibilities. They were also asked to rank the types of personality traits a media coordinator should have. Both groups saw curriculum integration, inservice training, and selection responsibilities as more important than district level coordination, production, research and development, distribution, community resource, maintenance or student audiovisual squad. Both groups believed that a media coordinator should be high in benevolence, in the middle as to leadership, and low in independence. One area of disagreement was the extent to which a media coordinator can and should also serve as a library consultant. A second area of confusion was the nature of the relationship between the media coordinator and the superintendent and others in the school district. (JY)

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Media Coordinators and Superintendents' Views: Interpretations About the Media Coordinator's Role

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MEDIA COORDINATORS AND SUPERINTENDENTS' VIEWS:
INTERPRETATIONS ABOUT THE MEDIA COORDINATOR'S ROLE

At a time when superintendents are charged with the rapid increase in the productivity of learning, there has never been a more challenging period for the full-time media coordinators. That is, for media coordinators who have the get-up and go to work as a leader in a cooperative venture to innovate and to seek improved ways of making the teaching-learning process more relevant. To accomplish this goal, media coordinators need talent, good judgment and charisma. As this report will show, media coordinators and superintendents share similar views on the ranking of school system responsibilities for a media coordinator. However, a lack of consensus either among or between these two groups exists as to the coordinator's personality assessment...involving the media coordinator's relationships to other people or their relationships to him.[1] This particular finding, in itself, indicates study because some media coordinators may be unable to fulfill certain responsibilities when the demands are incompatible with their personal need.

Lack of an agreement as to the coordinator's interpersonal values represents a problem because these motivational patterns, or the values that a media coordinator holds, might characteristically describe how the media coordinator would

perform these responsibilities. More to the point, it is possible that media coordinators risk losing their distinctive role because the manner in which the responsibilities are taken and the functions are accomplished will vary with the characteristics of the media coordinator. This means that the manner in which the coordinator goes about guiding his duties and reacting to the results obtained may be at odds with the expectations taken by the administration. Therefore, superintendents are not impressed entirely by one's training for the media job but rather by a combination of adequate competencies and of personal abilities deemed necessary.

The Study

This study continues in the direction of previous explorations pertaining to the media man's role and function in the school system. In the past educators have verified that as long as the structure of a school system is simple and static, established values will be reflected in the changing pattern of what one does or how well he performs. These trends have been reflected in articles that bring to our attention the discrepancies which exist among the institutions which train our media coordinators and the discrepancies which exist in terms of the states' audiovisual certification standards. Both institutions of higher learning and state departments of education concentrate more on what should be done than on how it should be done. The

superintendent, on the other hand, tends to rest his recommendation for the hiring of a media coordinator on two factors. The first factor deals with the necessary academic credentials which will fit into the school system's patterns of activities. The second factor pertains to personality traits exhibited by the media candidate which suggest that the candidate has the capacity to implement ideas and to anticipate problems before they can occur.

School superintendents are looking for qualified and competent educators to handle media programs which are and will become ever more challenging. Today it is necessary to determine whether or not discrepancies exist between superintendents' image of the media coordinator and the media coordinators' view of themselves. In other words, do today's media coordinators and superintendents see eye to eye on the personal qualities and professional responsibilities of the media man? To answer this central question, two issues were identified and presented to media coordinators and superintendents in thirty New York State school systems. The questions posed are described below.

Issue One:

Are full-time media coordinators' responsibilities, as proposed by different leaders in the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, in agreement with the desired and actual tasks considered by the media coordinator and his school system's superintendent?

Issue Two:

Are the critical values involving the media coordinator's relationship to others or their relationships to him, the same as those that the superintendent attributes to a competent media coordinator.

In order to delineate the full-time role of the coordinator, a ranking questionnaire was developed from the findings of Fite ("Is the Audiovisual Coordinator a Full-Fledged Professional Partner?", AVI, May 1970). Ten responsibilities were used by Fite: community resource, curriculum integration, distribution, district-level liaison, inservice training, maintenance, production, research and development, selection, and student audiovisual squad. In addition to the above, an eleventh task, namely, library-media responsibilities was added by the writer. This addition was based on preliminary findings from a pilot study conducted prior to this report.

Arranged in an alphabetical listing, these eleven responsibilities, augmented with task descriptions,[2] were sent to school district superintendents and representative media coordinators from their districts. Directions were given to both groups: Rank the importance for each of these eleven responsibilities. (In conjunction with the ranking of the responsibilities supplied by the media coordinators, the coordinators estimated the percentage of time that they spent on each responsibility.)

In order to delineate the media coordinator's personality assessment in terms of the traits that typify his behavior, permission was received from Science Research Associates to use Gordon's "Survey of Interpersonal Values." The six values measured are as follows:

C - Conformity: Doing what is socially correct, following regulations closely, doing what is accepted and proper, being a conformist.

R - Recognition: Being looked up to and admired, being considered important, attracting favorable notice, achieving recognition.

B - Benevolence: Doing things for other people, sharing with others, helping the unfortunate, being generous.

I - Independence: Having the right to do whatever one wants to do, being free to make one's own decisions, being able to do things in one's own way.

L - Leadership: Being in charge of other people, having authority over others, being in a position of leadership or power.

S - Support: Being treated with understanding, receiving encouragement from other people, being treated with kindness and consideration.

In regard to the Survey of Interpersonal Values, the directions to the superintendents were different from the directions given to the media coordinators. The superintendents were asked to judge how they felt a competent media coordinator might respond to the value questionnaire. The media coordinators, on the other hand, were asked to respond to the questionnaire from their own viewpoint.

Thirty school districts ranging in social and economic characteristics were selected based on the district coordinator's past affiliation with the Department of Educational Communications at the State University of New York at Albany. Approximately 85% of the school districts reported were in the suburban-city areas. Although the average time delegated to media responsibilities balanced at 80%, the range covered from 20% to 100%. In all cases these coordinators were successful teachers with advanced training in educational communications and charged with the responsibility for implementing their school's media program.

Each media coordinator and superintendent was contacted separately to respond to the forms. In only eight cases did the superintendent decline to reply. Thus, the findings are based on an approximate 73% of the combined paired returns.

Findings

Table I presents a ranking of the eleven competencies by superintendents and media coordinators and for comparison purposes, the ordering of the media coordinators' time

spent on each competency. Both the superintendents and media coordinators displayed a high degree of agreement on their rankings of competencies. Most interesting was the fact that both groups saw curriculum integration, inservice training and selection responsibilities at the top of the list. At the same time, both groups ranked community resource responsibilities, maintenance responsibilities and student audiovisual squad responsibilities at the bottom of the list.

Noting that the superintendents and media coordinators were expressing an opinion as to what the competencies should be, it follows that one would inquire as to what the media coordinators, in fact, were doing. Findings based on non-parametric statistics imply that what the media coordinators think their professional tasks should be, and what they are doing, are positively correlated.

Before one concludes that things are going well for the media coordinators, it is suggested that one study Table I again. A subtle distinction is noticed in regard to the library-media responsibility. Superintendents, as a group, rank this fourth while media coordinators rank this sixth. Furthermore, in terms of time that coordinators spent on this task, the library-media responsibility holds a position third from the bottom. These facts, supported by descriptive statistics, suggest that the library-media

responsibility is placed in a higher regard by the superintendents than by the media coordinators.

Other findings are equally as interesting. For example, although both groups realize the importance of inservice training, the same amount of time is allocated for that task as is the time allocated for the less glamouous responsibilities of distribution and maintenance. In general, it is incongruous that the time allocated to the top three activities and to the bottom three activities should differ only by 6%.

Table II presents the reader with the opportunity to study the distribution of the twenty-two superintendents and their media coordinators in regard to the strength of the six interpersonal values. These values pertained to how the superintendents pictured a competent media coordinator and to how the media coordinators evisioned themselves.

With the possible exception of support, chi-square statistics indicated no significant differences in the obtained frequencies for three-by-two contingency tables. That implies that for the interpersonal values of conformity, recognition, benevolence, independence and leadership, neither the superintendents nor media coordinators differed in proportion to attributing these values to being very high, in the middle or very low. Another way of reporting this observation would be to say that the range of scores for these five values was more widely spread amongst these two groups

than between these two groups. In this situation, combined tabulations would suggest that the media coordinator should be high in benevolence, in the middle as to leadership, and low in independence.

In the case of one value, namely support, a chi-square test suggests that superintendents and coordinators hold different views on this matter. There was approximately as many administrators who thought that this value should be considered high for the coordinator as there were media coordinators who thought that this value should be considered low.

In regard to the six personality values, Table III shows the number of agreements and disagreements that exist between each dyad of superintendent and representative media coordinator from that school district. Agreement implies that on the separate survey forms of interpersonal values, both the superintendent and the coordinator were in accordance. However, this agreement means that the similiarity of each pair of scores could have been assigned to either the high, middle, or low range of the scale formulated in the Survey of Interpersonal Values.

In order to determine whether the distribution in Table III was different than by chance occurrence, another descriptive statistic was derived. Indications suggest the possibility of a difference. In part, this difference was due to superintendents and their coordinators being in discord as to the value of conformity. More important is the overall

trend established in this table: More than half of all the superintendents and their media coordinators exhibit a disagreement on all of the six values.

Interpretations

Two issues are explored in this limited study which involved the cooperation of twenty-two school districts in New York State. One issue pertains to agreement on the media coordinator's responsibilities and the other issue pertains to agreement on the media coordinator's personality assessment.

The first issue questions whether superintendents and media coordinators are in agreement regarding the ranking of eleven media responsibilities. Evidence from this study is in the affirmative. Since there has been an increasing emphasis placed on improving instruction, (through the efforts of professional organizations and publications, public support, and universities) media responsibilities have progressed beyond the service functions toward the performance of instructional development. Superintendents are aware of this change but perhaps do not understand totally what instructional development requires. For in order to plan and implement methodology, materials and media for maximizing the impact of instruction on the learner, there is a need for research and development. As a group, superintendents ranked this responsibility seventh. Although media

coordinators ranked this same responsibility fifth, it is obvious that in day to day activities, coordinators are constantly involved in research and development when they initiate cooperative curricula undertakings with others.

While there appears to be administrative encouragement for media coordinators to join curricula teams in improving education, certain practical demands limit the visibility of the media specialist. Internal demands such as maintenance and distribution responsibilities compete with follow-through time for working with teachers. External demands such as competitive library certification standards continue to place the coordinator in a dilemma as to his status. Today, media coordinators should wonder whether they would be on firmer grounds if they had library certification to boost their credentials. Perhaps the real dilemma rests with the superintendents who are teased with the ease of selecting personnel who carry double credentials but find that they can expect only token results in either curriculum integration or library-media responsibilities.

The second issue questions whether the superintendents and media coordinators are in agreement as the coordinator's relationship to others or their relationship to him. Neither group has committed itself toward a description of the media coordinator which blends in with platitudes that picture the coordinator as alert, imaginative, persuasive and a reflective thinker. Instead, a combined pattern exists to suggest that media coordinators should be understanding, personable in personal relations, capable in original thinking, exert

some assertion but not too much and show responsibility. There is nothing wrong with this image. What is wrong is that neither group has this general view completely in mind.

This lack of consensus as to an imagery and to the conflict between time for media services and instructional development adds up to "media shock"...a malady of the times. When the role and responsibility of media specialists are changing quicker than the administrators realize, or the coordinators care to admit, then it is necessary to give more impetus to two AECT policies of action. First, more communications and interactions with professional organizations such as the American Library Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the American Association of School Administrators. Second, and most important, the opportunity for media candidates to develop a detailed and systematic description of the process whereby their self-image develops as they improve their understanding of devices, people, processes and values.

FOOTNOTES

[1]In personality assessment, an individual may be described in terms of the traits that typify his behavior or the values that he holds. This study used Leonard V. Gordon's "Survey of Interpersonal Values" (Science Research Associates, Inc., 1960), because of the reliability and validity documented for its measurements of six value scales: Support; Conformity; Recognition; Independence; Benevolence; and Leadership.

[2]Task descriptions for each of the eleven responsibilities can be requested from the writer.

Table I -- Eleven Media Coordinator Responsibilities Arranged in Rank Order of Importance in Conjunction with the Coordinators' Estimate of Allocated Time

	Superintendents* Ranking of Media Responsibilities	Media Coordinators** Ranking of Responsibilities	Percentage of Time/Week Spent on Responsibilities
1st	Curriculum Integration	Curriculum Integration	Curriculum Integration--15%
2nd	Inservice Training	Inservice Training	Selection--12%
3rd	Selection	Selection	Research and Development--10%
4th	Library-Media	District-Level Coordination	Inservice Training--10%
5th	District-Level Coordination	Research and Development	Maintenance--10%
6th	Production	Library-Media	Distribution--10%
7th	Research and Development	Distribution	District-Level Coordination--9
8th	Distribution	Production	Production--9%
9th	Community Resource	Maintenance	Library-Media--5%
10th	Maintenance	Community Resource	Student Audiovisual Squad--5%
11th	Student Audiovisual Squad	Student Audiovisual Squad	Community Resources--5%

*A rank correlation coefficient of .93 was calculated for the ratings given by 22 superintendents and 22 media coordinators. A necessary value of Z at the .05 level for a one-tail test was obtained.

**A rank correlation coefficient of .79 was calculated for agreement between media coordinators ranking and allocation of time required for responsibilities. A value of Z at the .05 level for a one-tail test was obtained.

Table II-- A Comparison of the Assignment of Values for the Media Coordinator as Perceived by Superintendents and Professed by Media Coordinators: Arranged in Ranges of Norms as Established in the Survey of Interpersonal Values

	High Range of Norms		Middle Range of Norms		Low Range of Norms	
	Supt.	Media Coord.	Supt.	Media Coord.	Supt.	Media Coord.
Conformity	6	7	8	9	8	6
Recognition	5	3	6	8	11	11
Benevolence	13	11	7	7	2	4
Independence	3	4	5	7	14	11
Leadership	6	10	10	9	6	3
Support*	8	2	9	10	5	10

* At the .10 significance level for a chi square test

Table III- A Breakdown of the Distribution of Twenty-Two Superintendents and Their Respective Media Coordinators in Regard to the Types of Values That a Media Coordinator Should Have *

	Conformity	Recognition	Benevolence	Independence	Leadership	Support
Number of Agreements Between Each Superintendent and His Representative Media Coordinator	7	8	10	10	8	9
Number of Disagreements Between Each Superintendent and His Representative Media Coordinator	15	14	12	12	14	13

* At the .10 significance level for a chi square test